

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Universal Precautions are guidelines that assume that all people are infected with a bloodborne disease so that simple practices can be instituted to protect workers at risk of exposure. In reality, most people are completely free of bloodborne pathogens and therefore not infectious, but this precaution is to protect all caregivers from that one exposure that just might be infectious.

Bloodborne diseases are diseases carried by the blood and possibly by other body fluids as well (semen, vaginal secretions, and mucous membranes of mouth, eye, or nose). Such diseases are:

Hepatitis B

(HBV – inflammation of the liver that can cause liver damage, cirrhosis of the liver and death)

Human Immunodeficiency Virus

(HIV – attacks the body's immune system and ultimately leads to AIDS)

Examples of situations where the teacher or staff member might find themselves unable to avoid exposure to another's bodily fluids may be in assisting students that have cut or scraped themselves, have a nosebleed, or are nauseous and vomiting.

By far, the best precaution anyone can do for himself or herself is proper handwashing after coming in contact with potential viruses or bacteria. This technique of thoroughly washing with soap and running water (or in some situations of no available water, an antiseptic hand cleanser) will wash away any harmful pathogens so that this person does not infect themselves, their work area, their food, or the next person they touch.

The use of latex gloves prior to exposure to another's blood or body fluids is the most popular and easiest practice of safeguarding oneself from contact with pathogens. Covering any cuts on one's hands with a Band-Aid will have added and necessary benefits of self-protection as well. Once used, the gloves should be carefully removed (from the inside out), discarded and proper handwashing practice. Replacement gloves can be obtained at any time from the Nurse's office and will be the responsibility of the staff member to get his or her own replacements.

Discarding any used tissues, bandages, Band-Aids, etc. from your classroom and hallway floors promptly and safely will help to keep our school environment safe for all students and staff. The housekeeping staff has universal precaution guidelines to assist in cleaning up any large bodily spills that might occur as well.

AmeriCorps member signature

10/1/2008
Date